

The Man Behind The Treatment Plant

By Judith Epstein

Manuel ("Manny") Salvador has a tough job in more ways than one. He is the chief operator of Cohasset's wastewater treatment plant and a strong proponent of a new facility at Whale Meadow off Atlantic Avenue.

Several serious factors lead Salvador to believe that Cohasset is in dire need of a new treatment plant. These include: Cohasset's effluent discharge permit to James issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is valid only until Dec. 31, 1981; the current plant is beyond capacity outflow of 72,000 gallons per day; areas of the hillside, Veterans' Project and portions of Route 3A have sewerage difficulties; and state and federal citations for pollution counts upstream of the plant have come in for the past two months.

The current plant located off Elm Street sewers the high school, the harbor, and the business district. "One line comes down the Mill River Bridge and Howard Gleason Road, then another comes across the marsh from the high school, and a third comes from the Savings Bank, by the Gown Museum, left by the hardware store, and picks up the back buildings," Salvador said, putting the whole system into a nutshell. "It all flows by gravity," he said, "except for the high school which gets pumped from the top of Pond Street."

As the person most intimately aware of the daily quality of the water flowing back into James Brook at the end of its treatment of the plant, adhering to a strict hour-by-hour laboratory and maintenance schedule to meet the requirements of state and federal health agencies, Salvador feels more than justified in his fight to see a good part of the town sewered. Yet he didn't vote for the proposed Metcalf and Eddy site or treatment plant at this year's Town Meeting.

Those articles recommended the next phase of planning for a new sewage treatment plant, and the assignation of a site on a portion of School Facilities land, comprised of 79 acres of land between Smith Place and Sohler Street at the bottom of Deer Hill with access from the intersection of Smith Place and Cushing Road. The first article was defeated, which prohibited a vote from being taken on the site. Salvador feels particularly that the latter issue is one that Cohasset residents will have to come to grips with.

Before Metcalf and Eddy was engaged to prepare the studies, Salvador said, several engineering firms were interviewed and shown all possible locations for a new facility.

Whale Meadow and Jacob Meadow were the only two sites they all chose, he said. "We are lucky to have a section of land near the water which fits our needs," Salvador said, of the Whale Meadow site.

"There is a hill 75 feet high. The marsh land was filled with a dredge material in 1932, so it is no longer a virgin marsh. The proposed drawings show a building facing the Yacht Club, or a building against this high hill which will not be seen. The tanks would be low, so no one's view to the ocean will be blocked. Only one house would look over the facility and see shrubs and trees," Salvador said.

"Atlantic Avenue has only the Yacht Club to contend with," he said, referring to the proposed site which he feels may come in the way of Deer Hill School. "People sit back and say nothing, yet they are the people that need sewage treatment. We must act now for the EPA funds for

plants are being cut by Congress. Instead of a 10 percent cost to Cohasset, it could be 35 percent," he said.

At the time of the articles' defeat, Water and Sewer Commissioner John Hobbs concurred. Cohasset's share of the \$12.7 Metcalf and Eddy project would have been \$3.9, but now faced with the sewer alternative the state recommends, the town may have to bear more of the brunt of the cost, Hobbs said.

A tour of the current system elucidated the conventional activated sludge system employed in Cohasset. Salvador explained that the raw sewerage collects into a grinder which separates the sewerage. The liquid is then pumped into three large holding tanks where large vanes agitate the water. The first tank contains old and new sewerage which undergo an aeration process. The residue from that tank is piped into a settling tank

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Manny Salvador

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